

LOVE AS PRESENTED IN POEMS BY

Phil Kaye and Sarah Kay



Image from "Sarah Kay & Phil Kaye Live in San Francisco 2019." Brava for Women in the Arts, www.brava.org/all-events/2019/1/10/sarah-kay-amp-phil-kaye-live-in-san-francisco-2019.

Spoken-word poets Phil Kaye and Sarah Kay explore many topics in both their individual and collective poems. Some of the main themes present in their work concerns love, relationships, and the lessons learned from such experiences. According to the Ancient Greeks there are eight distinct types of love, four of which are most central in the work of Phil and Sarah: pragma, philia, storage, and agape.

EXAMPLES OF THE FOUR TYPES OF LOVE

PRAGMA

Pragma, translates to "long-lasting love". It is the love felt between you and your partner. It is a type of love that has grown and matured over time and is more about staying in love than falling in it. This is arguably the most common form of love in their works.

"But we found a park bench that fit us perfectly, we found jokes that make us laugh. And now, love makes me fresh homemade chocolate chip cookies.

But love will probably finish most of them for a midnight snack. Love looks great in lingerie but still likes to wear her retainer. Love is a terrible driver, but a great navigator. Love knows where she's going, it just might take her two hours longer than she planned. Love is messier now, not as simple"
(Button Poetry, 2015, 2:14).

PHIL KAYE AND SARAH KAYE, "WHEN LOVE ARRIVES"

"I know about your rough edges and I have seen your perfect curves, and I will fit into any spaces you let me. If loving you means getting dirty, bring on the grime, I will leave this porcelain home behind. I'm used to twice a day relationships, but with you, I'll take all the time. And I know, we live in different world and we're always really busy" (Speakeasy NYC, 2010, 1:01).

SARAH KAY, "LOVE LETTER FROM THE TOOTHBRUSH TO THE BICLYLE TIRE"

PHILIA

Philia, or friendly love, is the love felt and displayed between close friends and communities. Unlike eros, it is a dispassionate love that has no romantic component to it. Instead philia is a virtuous love that is built on familiarity and respect. This type of love is the least common one that Phil and Sarah write about, but that does not discredit the way that they are so easily able to put words to these types of feelings.

"But they could tell you how rare friendship is. The chances are slim. The cards are always stacked against you, the odds are low. But I have seen the best of you and the worst of you and I choose both. I want to share every single one of your sunshines and save some for later. I will tuck them into my pockets so I can give them back to you when the rains fall hard. Friend. I want to be the mirror that reminds you to love yourself. I want to be the air in your lungs that reminds you to breathe easy. When the walls come down, when the thunder rumbles, when nobody else is home, hold my hand and I promise, I won't let go" (Future of StoryTelling, 2014, 6:57).

PHIL KAYE AND SARAH KAY, "AN ORGIN STORY"

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STORGE

Storge is the love you share with your family and is the most natural form of love when know. In most families, we are usually unable to pinpoint when our love for our parents or siblings starts, but we know that it is ever-present and natural to us. It is the first case of both unconditional and conditional love that we are exposed to and acts as the foundation of the other manifestations of love we give.

"If I should have a daughter, instead of "Mom", she's gonna call me "Point B." Because that way, she knows that no matter what happens, at least she can always find her way to me" (TED, 2011, 0:15).

SARAH KAY, "B (IF I SHOULD HAVE A DAUGHTER)"

"You are my favourite stick of dynamite. You are the opposite of a rubber band. There are so many things I would tell you if I thought that you would listen and so many more that you would tell me if you believed I would understand. I hope you know that you were never meant to wear this shadow. In fact, I'm the one who always steals your shoes but- is that my sweatshirt you're wearing? It's okay, you can keep it, I won't tell your secret. In fact, it really does look better on you" (Speakeasy NYC, 2009, 2:25).

SARAH KAY, "BROTHER"

EROS

Eros, or romantic love, is the passionate love we experience through desire. It is the love that comes from the desire for another person's physical body.

"We didn't grow up, we grew in, like ivy wrapping, moulding each other into perfect yins and yangs. We kissed with mouths open, breathing his exhale into my inhale. We could have survived underwater or outer space, breathing only the breathe we traded. We spelled love, g-i-v-e, I never wanted to hide my body from him - if I could have I would have given it all away with the rest of me" (Button Poetry, 2015, 1:15).

SARAH KAY, ""PRIVATE PARTS"

" But those poems have fallen to the wayside as I find I belong up against your chest, your arms around my back, my head under you chin, eyes closed" (Taylor Mali, 2011, 3:44).

SARAH KAY, "WORST POETRY"

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